HOUSE BILL 1814

State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session

By Representative Shewmake

Prefiled 01/06/22.

AN ACT Relating to expanding equitable access to the benefits of renewable energy through community solar projects; amending RCW 82.16.130, 82.16.160, 82.16.165, 82.16.170, 82.16.110, 82.16.120, 82.16.150, and 82.16.155; adding new sections to chapter 82.16 RCW; creating new sections; providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds and declares that 8 stimulating local investment in community solar projects continues to 9 10 be an important part of a state energy strategy by helping to 11 increase energy independence from fossil fuels, promote economic 12 development, hedge against the effects of climate change, and attain environmental benefits. The legislature finds that although previous 13 14 community solar programs were successful in stimulating these 15 benefits, the programs failed to provide an adequate framework for 16 low-income participation and long-term market certainty. The 17 legislature finds that the vast majority of Washingtonians still do not have access to the benefits of solar energy. The legislature 18 19 intends to stimulate the deployment of community solar projects for 20 the benefit of all Washingtonians by funding the renewable energy production incentive program for community solar projects and by 21

1 creating opportunities for broader participation, especially by lowincome households and low-income service providers. As of December 2 2021, the state is 10.3 megawatts short of the 115 megawatts of solar 3 photovoltaic capacity established as a goal under RCW 82.16.155. The 4 legislature therefore intends to provide an incentive sufficient to 5 6 promote installation of community solar projects through June 30, 7 2033, at which point the legislature expects to review the effectiveness of enhancing access to community solar projects. 8

9 Sec. 2. RCW 82.16.130 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 4 are each 10 amended to read as follows:

(1) A light and power business is allowed a credit against taxes due under this chapter in an amount equal to:

13 (a) Incentive payments made in any fiscal year under RCW14 82.16.120 and 82.16.165; and

(b) Any fees a utility is allowed to recover pursuant to RCW 82.16.165(5).

(2) The credits must be taken in a form and manner as required by the department. The credit taken under this section for the fiscal year may not exceed one and one-half percent of the ((businesses')) business's taxable power sales generated in calendar year 2014 and due under RCW 82.16.020(1)(b) or two hundred fifty thousand dollars, whichever is greater, for incentive payments made for the following:

23 (a) Renewable energy systems, other than community solar 24 projects, that are certified for an incentive payment as of June 30, 25 <u>2020; and</u>

(b) Community solar and shared commercial projects that are under precertification status under RCW 82.16.165(7)(b) as of June 30, 28 2020, and that are certified for an incentive payment in accordance with the terms of that precertification by June 30, 2022.

30 (3) The credit may not exceed the tax that would otherwise be due 31 under this chapter. Refunds may not be granted in the place of 32 credits. Expenditures not used to earn a credit in one fiscal year 33 may not be used to earn a credit in subsequent years.

34 (4) For any business that has claimed credit for amounts that 35 exceed the correct amount of the incentive payable under RCW 36 82.16.120, the amount of tax against which credit was claimed for the 37 excess payments is immediately due and payable. The department may 38 deduct amounts due from future credits claimed by the business.

1 (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the department 2 must assess interest but not penalties on the taxes against which the 3 credit was claimed. Interest must be assessed at the rate provided 4 for delinquent excise taxes under chapter 82.32 RCW, retroactively to 5 the date the credit was claimed, and accrues until the taxes against 6 which the credit was claimed are repaid.

7 (b) A business is not liable for excess payments made in reliance 8 on amounts reported by the Washington State University extension 9 energy program as due and payable as provided under RCW 10 82.16.165(20), if such amounts are later found to be abnormal or 11 inaccurate due to no fault of the business.

12 (5) The amount of credit taken under this section is not 13 confidential taxpayer information under RCW 82.32.330 and is subject 14 to disclosure.

15 (6) The right to earn tax credits for incentive payments made 16 under RCW 82.16.120 expires June 30, 2020. Credits may not be claimed 17 after June 30, 2021.

18 (7) (a) The right to earn tax credits for incentive payments made 19 under RCW 82.16.165 for the following expires June 30, 2029:

20 (i) Renewable energy systems, other than community solar 21 projects, that are certified for an incentive payment as of June 30, 22 <u>2020; and</u>

(ii) Community solar and shared commercial projects that are under precertification status under RCW 82.16.165(7)(b) as of June 30, 2020, and that are certified for an incentive payment in accordance with the terms of that precertification by June 30, 2022.

27 (b) Credits may not be claimed after June 30, 2030.

28 (8) This section expires June 30, 2033.

29 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 82.16
30 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Beginning July 1, 2022, a light and power business is allowed a credit against taxes due under this chapter in an amount equal to incentive payments made in any fiscal year under section 7 of this act.

35 (2) The credits must be taken in a form and manner as required by 36 the department. The credit taken under this section for the fiscal 37 year may not exceed 1.5 percent of the business's taxable power sales 38 generated in calendar year 2014 and due under RCW 82.16.020(1)(b) or 39 \$250,000, whichever is greater, for incentive payments made for

1 community solar projects that submit an application for 2 precertification under section 7 of this act on or after July 1, 3 2022, and that are certified for an incentive payment in accordance 4 with the terms of that precertification by June 30, 2033.

5 (3) The credit may not exceed the tax that would otherwise be due 6 under this chapter. Refunds may not be granted in the place of 7 credits.

8 (4) For any business that has claimed credit for amounts that 9 exceed the correct amount of the incentive payable under section 7 of 10 this act, the amount of tax against which credit was claimed for the 11 excess payments is immediately due and payable. The department may 12 deduct amounts from future credits claimed by the business.

(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the department must assess interest but not penalties on the taxes against which the credit was claimed. Interest may be assessed at the rate provided for delinquent excise taxes under chapter 82.32 RCW, retroactively to the date the credit was claimed, and accrues until the taxes against which the credit was claimed are repaid.

(b) A business is not liable for excess payments made in reliance on amounts reported by the Washington State University extension energy program as due and payable as provided under section 7 of this act, if such amounts are later found to be abnormal or inaccurate due to no fault of the business.

(5) The amount of credit taken under this section is not confidential taxpayer information under RCW 82.32.330 and is subject to disclosure.

(6) The right to earn tax credits for incentive payments made under section 7 of this act expires June 30, 2036. Credits may not be claimed under this section after June 30, 2037.

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(7) This section expires June 30, 2038.

31 Sec. 4. RCW 82.16.160 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 5 are each 32 amended to read as follows:

33 (1) The definitions in this section apply throughout this section 34 and RCW 82.16.165(($\frac{82.16.170_{7}}{}$)) and 82.16.175 unless the context 35 clearly requires otherwise.

36 (((1))) <u>(a)</u> "Administrator" means the utility, nonprofit, or 37 other local housing authority that organizes and administers a 38 community solar project as provided in RCW 82.16.165 and 82.16.170.

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1 (((2))) <u>(b)</u> "Certification" means the authorization issued by the 2 Washington State University extension energy program establishing a 3 person's eligibility to receive annual incentive payments from the 4 person's utility for the program term.

5 ((-(3))) (c) "Commercial-scale system" means a renewable energy 6 system or systems other than a community solar project or a shared 7 commercial solar project with a combined nameplate capacity greater 8 than twelve kilowatts that meets the applicable system eligibility 9 requirements established in RCW 82.16.165.

10 (((4))) <u>(d)</u> "Community solar project" means a solar energy system 11 that has a direct current nameplate generating capacity that is no 12 larger than one thousand kilowatts and meets the applicable 13 eligibility requirements established in RCW 82.16.165 and 82.16.170.

14 (((5))) <u>(e)</u> "Consumer-owned utility" has the same meaning as in 15 RCW 19.280.020.

16 (((6))) <u>(f)</u> "Customer-owner" means the owner of a residential-17 scale or commercial-scale renewable energy system, where such owner 18 is not a utility and such owner is a customer of the utility and 19 either owns the premises where the renewable energy system is 20 installed or occupies the premises.

21 (((7))) <u>(g)</u> "Electric utility" or "utility" means a consumer-22 owned utility or investor-owned utility as those terms are defined in 23 RCW 19.280.020.

24 (((8))) <u>(h)</u> "Governing body" has the same meaning as provided in 25 RCW 19.280.020.

26 (((9))) <u>(i)</u> "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, 27 corporation, company, association, agency, or any other legal entity.

28 (((10))) <u>(j)</u> "Program term" means: (((a))) <u>(i)</u> For community solar projects that are certified under RCW_82.16.165, eight years or 29 until cumulative incentive payments for electricity produced by the 30 31 project reach fifty percent of the total system price, including applicable sales tax, whichever occurs first; and (((b))) (ii) for 32 other renewable energy systems, including shared commercial solar 33 projects, eight years or until cumulative incentive payments for 34 35 electricity produced by a system reach fifty percent of the total 36 system price, including applicable sales tax, whichever occurs first.

37 (((11))) <u>(k)</u> "Renewable energy system" means a solar energy 38 system, including a community solar project, an anaerobic digester as 39 defined in RCW 82.08.900, or a wind generator used for producing 40 electricity. 1 (((12))) (1) "Residential-scale system" means a renewable energy 2 system or systems located at a single situs with combined nameplate 3 capacity of twelve kilowatts or less that meets the applicable system 4 eligibility requirements established in RCW 82.16.165.

5 (((13))) <u>(m)</u> "Shared commercial solar project" means a solar 6 energy system, owned or administered by an electric utility, with a 7 combined nameplate capacity of greater than one megawatt and not more 8 than five megawatts and meets the applicable eligibility requirements 9 established in RCW 82.16.165 and 82.16.175.

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(2) This section expires June 30, 2033.

11 Sec. 5. RCW 82.16.165 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 6 are each 12 amended to read as follows:

(1) Beginning July 1, 2017, <u>and through June 30, 2020</u>, the following persons may submit a one-time application to the Washington State University extension energy program to receive a certification authorizing the utility serving the situs of a renewable energy system in the state of Washington to remit an annual production incentive for each kilowatt-hour of alternating current electricity generated by the renewable energy system:

(a) The utility's customer who is the customer-owner of a
 residential-scale or commercial-scale renewable energy system;

(b) An administrator of a community solar project meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in RCW 82.16.170(2) and applies for certification on behalf of each of the project participants; or

(c) A utility or a business under contract with a utility that administers a shared commercial solar project that meets the eligibility requirements in RCW 82.16.175 and applies for certification on behalf of each of the project participants.

(2) No person, business, or household is eligible to receive incentive payments provided under subsection (1) of this section of more than five thousand dollars per year for residential systems or community solar projects, twenty-five thousand dollars per year for commercial-scale systems, or thirty-five thousand dollars per year for shared commercial solar projects.

35 (3)(a) No new certification may be issued under this section to 36 an applicant who submits a request for or receives an annual 37 incentive payment for a renewable energy system that was certified 38 under RCW 82.16.120, or for a renewable energy system served by a utility that has elected not to participate in the incentive program,
 as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

3 (b) The Washington State University extension energy program may 4 issue a new certification for an additional system installed at a 5 situs with a previously certified system so long as the new system 6 meets the requirements of this section and its production can be 7 measured separately from the previously certified system.

(c) The Washington State University extension energy program may 8 issue a recertification for a residential-scale or commercial-scale 9 system if a customer makes investments resulting in an expansion of 10 11 the system's nameplate capacity. Such recertification expires on the same day as the original certification for the residential-scale or 12 13 commercial-scale system and applies to the entire system the incentive rates and program rules in effect as of the date of the 14 recertification. 15

16 (4) A utility's participation in the incentive program provided 17 in this section is voluntary.

(a) A utility electing to participate in the incentive program
 must notify the Washington State University extension energy program
 of such election in writing.

(b) The utility may terminate its voluntary participation in the production incentive program by providing notice in writing to the Washington State University extension energy program to cease issuing new certifications for renewable energy systems that would be served by that utility.

(c) Such notice of termination of participation is effective after fifteen days, at which point the Washington State University extension energy program may not accept new applications for certification of renewable energy systems that would be served by that utility.

31 (d) Upon receiving a utility's notice of termination of 32 participation in the incentive program, the Washington State 33 University extension energy program must report on its website that 34 customers of that utility are no longer eligible to receive new 35 certifications under the program.

36 (e) A utility's termination of participation does not affect the 37 utility's obligation to continue to make annual incentive payments 38 for electricity generated by systems that were certified prior to the 39 effective date of the notice. The Washington State University 40 extension energy program must continue to process and issue

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certifications for renewable energy systems that were received by the
 Washington State University extension energy program before the
 effective date of the notice of termination.

4 (f) A utility that has terminated participation in the program
5 may resume participation upon filing notice with the Washington State
6 University extension energy program.

7 (5) (a) The Washington State University extension energy program may certify a renewable energy system that is connected to equipment 8 capable of measuring the electricity production of the system and 9 interconnecting with the utility's system in a manner that allows the 10 11 utility, or the customer at the utility's option, to measure and 12 report to the Washington State University extension energy program the total amount of electricity produced by the renewable energy 13 14 system.

15 (b) The Washington State University extension energy program must 16 establish a reporting and fee-for-service system to accept 17 electricity production data from the utility or the customer that is 18 not reported electronically and with the reporting entity selected at 19 the utility's option as described in subsection (19) of this section. The fee-for-service agreement must allow for electronic reporting or 20 reporting by mail, may be specific to individual utilities, and must 21 22 recover only the program's costs of obtaining the electricity production data and incorporating it into an electronic format. A 23 statement of the amount due for the fee-for-service must be provided 24 25 to the utility by the Washington State University extension energy 26 program with the report provided to the utility pursuant to subsection (20)(a) of this section. The utility may determine how to 27 28 assess and remit the fee, and the utility may be allowed a credit for 29 fees paid under this subsection (5) against taxes due, as provided in RCW 82.16.130(1). 30

31 (6) The Washington State University extension energy program may 32 issue a certification authorizing annual incentive payments up to the 33 following annual dollar limits:

34 (a) For community solar projects, five thousand dollars per35 project participant;

36 (b) For residential-scale systems, five thousand dollars;
37 (c) For commercial-scale systems, twenty-five thousand dollars;

38 and

1 (d) For shared commercial solar projects, up to thirty-five 2 thousand dollars a year per participant, as determined by the terms 3 of subsection (15) of this section.

(7) (a) To obtain certification for the incentive payment provided
under subsection (1) of this section by June 30, 2020, for renewable
energy systems other than community solar projects, or by June 30,
2022, for community solar projects, a person must submit to the
Washington State University extension energy program an application,
including:

(i) A signed statement that the applicant has not previously received a notice of eligibility from the department under RCW 82.16.120 entitling the applicant to receive annual incentive payments for electricity generated by the renewable energy system at the same meter location;

(ii) A signed statement of the total price, including applicablesales tax, paid by the applicant for the renewable energy system;

(iii) System operation data including global positioning system coordinates, tilt, estimated shading, and azimuth;

(iv) Any other information the Washington State University extension energy program deems necessary in determining eligibility and incentive levels, administering the program, tracking progress toward achieving the limits on program participation established in RCW 82.16.130, or facilitating the review of the performance of the tax preferences by the joint legislative audit and review committee, as described in RCW 82.16.155; and

(v) (A) Except as provided in (a) (v) (B) of this subsection (7), the date that the renewable energy system received its final electrical inspection from the applicable local jurisdiction, as well as a copy of the permit or, if the permit is available online, the permit number;

31 (B) The Washington State University extension energy program may 32 waive the requirement in (a) (v) (A) of this subsection (7), accepting an application and granting provisional certification prior to proof 33 of final electrical inspection. Provisional certification expires one 34 hundred eighty days after issuance, unless the applicant submits 35 proof of the final electrical inspection from the applicable local 36 jurisdiction or the Washington State University extension energy 37 program extends the certification, for a term or terms of thirty 38 39 days, due to extenuating circumstances; and

1 (b) (i) Prior to obtaining certification under this subsection, a community solar project or shared commercial solar project must apply 2 for precertification against the remaining funds available for 3 incentive payments under subsection (13)(d) of this section in order 4 to be guaranteed an incentive payment under subsection (1) of this 5 6 section. Community solar and shared commercial projects that are under precertification status under this subsection (7) as of June 7 30, 2020, may not apply for precertification for the incentive 8 payment provided under section 7 of this act for that same project; 9

10 (ii) A project applicant of a community solar project or shared 11 commercial solar project must complete an application for 12 certification with the Washington State University extension energy program within less than ((one year)) two years to retain the 13 precertification status described in this subsection. If a community 14 15 solar or shared commercial project application is in precertification status as of June 30, 2020, the project applicant must continue in 16 17 that status until either it is certified by the Washington State University extension energy program or its precertification expires; 18 19 and

(iii) The Washington State University extension energy program may design a reservation or precertification system for an applicant of a residential-scale or commercial-scale renewable energy system.

(8) No incentive payments may be authorized or accrued until the final electrical inspection and executed interconnection agreement are submitted to the Washington State University extension energy program.

27 (9) Within thirty days of receipt of ((the)) an application for 28 certification, the Washington State University extension energy program must notify the applicant and, except when a utility is the 29 applicant, the utility serving the situs of the renewable energy 30 31 system, by mail or electronically, whether certification has been 32 granted. The certification notice must state the rate to be paid per 33 kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by the renewable energy system, as provided in subsection (12) of this section, subject to 34 any applicable cap on total annual payment provided in subsection (6) 35 of this section. 36

(10) Certification is valid for the program term and entitles the applicant or, in the case of a community solar project or shared commercial solar project, the participant, to receive incentive payments for electricity generated from the date the renewable energy

1 system commences operation, or the date the system is certified, whichever date is later. For purposes of this subsection, the 2 3 Washington State University extension energy program must define when a renewable energy system commences operation and provide notice of 4 such date to the recipient and the utility serving the situs of the 5 6 system. Certification may not be retroactively changed except to 7 correct later discovered errors that were made during the original application or certification process. 8

9 (11)(a) System certification follows the system if the following 10 conditions are met using procedures established by the Washington 11 State University extension energy program:

12 (i) The renewable energy system is transferred to a new owner who 13 notifies the Washington State University extension energy program of 14 the transfer; and

15 (ii) The new owner provides an executed interconnection agreement 16 with the utility serving the premises.

17 (b) In the event that a community solar project participant 18 terminates their participation in a community solar project, the 19 system certification follows the system and participation may be 20 transferred to a new participant. The administrator of a community 21 solar project must provide notice to the Washington State University 22 extension energy program of any changes or transfers in project 23 participation.

(12) The Washington State University extension energy program 24 25 must determine the total incentive rate for ((a new renewable energy 26 system certification by adding to the base rate any applicable madein-Washington bonus rate)) renewable energy systems, other than a 27 28 community solar project, certified through June 30, 2020, and for community solar projects precertified as of June 30, 2020, and 29 certified through June 30, 2022, as provided in this subsection. A 30 31 made-in-Washington bonus rate is provided for a renewable energy 32 system or a community solar project with solar modules made in Washington or with a wind turbine or tower that is made 33 in Washington. Both the base rates and bonus rate vary, depending on the 34 fiscal year in which the system is certified and the type of 35 renewable energy system being certified, as provided in the following 36 37 table:

1	Fiscal year	Base rate -	Base rate -	Base rate -	Base rate - shared	Made in
2	of system	residential-scale	commercial-scale	community solar	commercial solar	Washington
3	certification					bonus
4	2018	\$0.16	\$0.06	\$0.16	\$0.06	\$0.05
5	2019	\$0.14	\$0.04	\$0.14	\$0.04	\$0.04
6	2020	\$0.12	\$0.02	\$0.12	\$0.02	((\$0.03))
7	2021	((\$0.10))	((\$0.02))	\$0.10	((\$0.02))	((\$0.02))

8 (13) The Washington State University extension energy program 9 must cease to issue new certifications:

10 (a) For community solar projects and shared commercial solar 11 projects in any fiscal year for which the Washington State University 12 extension energy program estimates that fifty percent of the 13 remaining funds for credit available to a utility for renewable 14 energy systems certified under this section as of July 1, 2017, have 15 been allocated to community solar projects and shared commercial 16 solar projects combined;

17 (b) For commercial-scale systems in any fiscal year for which the 18 Washington State University extension energy program estimates that 19 twenty-five percent of the remaining funds for credit available to a 20 utility for renewable energy systems certified under this section as 21 of July 1, 2017, have been allocated to commercial-scale systems;

(c) For any renewable energy system served by a utility, if certification is likely to result in incentive payments by that utility, including payments made under RCW 82.16.120, exceeding the utility's available funds for credit under RCW 82.16.130; and

(d) For any renewable energy system, if certification is likely
to result in total incentive payments under this section exceeding
one hundred ten million dollars.

29 (14) If the Washington State University extension energy program 30 ceases issuing new certifications during a fiscal year or biennium as 31 provided in subsection (13) of this section, in the following fiscal 32 year or biennium, or when additional funds are available for credit 33 such that the thresholds described in subsection (13) of this section 34 are no longer exceeded, the Washington State University extension 35 energy program must resume issuing new certifications using a method 36 of awarding certifications that results in equitable and orderly 37 allocation of benefits to applicants.

1 (15) A customer who is a participant in a shared commercial solar project may not receive incentive payments associated with the 2 3 project greater than the difference between the levelized cost of energy output of the system over its production life and the retail 4 rate for the rate class to which the customer belongs. The levelized 5 6 cost of the output of the energy must be determined by the utility that administers the shared commercial solar project and must be 7 disclosed, along with an explanation of the limitations on incentive 8 payments contained in this subsection (15), in the contractual 9 agreement with the shared commercial solar project participants. 10

(16) In order to begin to receive annual incentive payments, a person who has been issued a certification for the incentive as provided in subsection (9) of this section must obtain an executed interconnection agreement with the utility serving the situs of the renewable energy system.

16 (17) The Washington State University extension energy program 17 must establish a list of equipment that is eligible for the bonus rates described in subsection (12) of this section. The Washington 18 19 State University extension energy program must, in consultation with the department of commerce, develop technical specifications and 20 21 guidelines to ensure consistent and predictable determination of eligibility. A solar module is made in Washington for purposes of 22 23 receiving the bonus rate only if the lamination of the module takes place in Washington. A wind turbine is made in Washington only if it 24 25 is powered by a turbine or built with a tower manufactured in 26 Washington.

(18) The manufacturer of a renewable energy system component 27 28 subject to a bonus rate under subsection (12) of this section may 29 apply to the Washington State University extension energy program to receive a determination of eligibility for such bonus rates. The 30 Washington State University extension energy program must publish a 31 32 list of components that have been certified as eligible for such 33 bonus rates. The Washington State University extension energy program may assess an equipment certification fee to recover its costs. The 34 Washington State University extension energy program must deposit all 35 36 revenue generated by this fee into the state general fund.

37 (19) Annually, the utility must report electronically to the 38 Washington State University extension energy program the amount of 39 gross kilowatt-hours generated by each renewable energy system since 40 the prior annual report. For the purposes of this section, to report

1 electronically means to submit statistical or factual information in alphanumeric form through a website established by the Washington 2 3 State University extension energy program or in a list, table, spreadsheet, or other nonnarrative format that can be digitally 4 transmitted or processed. The utility may instead opt to report by 5 6 mail or require program participants to report individually, but if 7 the utility exercises one or more of these options it must negotiate with the Washington State University extension energy program the 8 fee-for-service arrangement described in subsection (5)(b) of this 9 10 section.

11 (20) (a) The Washington State University extension energy program 12 must calculate for the year and provide to the utility the amount of the incentive payment due to each participant and the total amount of 13 credit against tax due available to the utility under RCW 82.16.130 14 15 that has been allocated as annual incentive payments. Upon notice to 16 the Washington State University extension energy program, a utility 17 may opt to directly perform this calculation and provide its results 18 to the Washington State University extension energy program.

19 (b) If the Washington State University extension energy program identifies an abnormal production claim, it must notify the utility, 20 21 the department of revenue, and the applicant, and must recommend withholding payment until the applicant has demonstrated that the 22 23 production claim is accurate and valid. The utility is not liable to the customer for withholding payments pursuant to such recommendation 24 25 unless and until the Washington State University extension energy 26 program notifies the utility to resume incentive payments.

27 (21) (a) The utility must issue the incentive payment within 28 ninety days of receipt of the information required under subsection 29 (20) (a) of this section from the Washington State University extension energy program. The utility must resume the incentive 30 31 payments withheld under subsection (20) (b) of this section within 32 thirty days of receiving notice from the Washington State University 33 extension energy program that the claim has been demonstrated accurate and valid and payment should be resumed. 34

35 (b) A utility is not liable for incentive payments to a customer-36 owner if the utility has disconnected the customer due to a violation 37 of a customer service agreement, such as nonpayment of the customer's 38 bill, or a violation of an interconnection agreement. 1 (22) Beginning January 1, 2018, the Washington State University 2 extension energy program must post on its website and update at least 3 monthly a report, by utility, of:

4 (a) The number of certifications issued for renewable energy
5 systems, including estimated system sizes, costs, and annual energy
6 production and incentive yields for various system types; and

7 (b) An estimate of the amount of credit that has not yet been 8 allocated for incentive payments under each utility's credit limit 9 and remains available for new renewable energy system certifications.

(23) Persons receiving incentive payments under this section must 10 11 keep and preserve, for a period of five years for the duration of the 12 consumer contract, suitable records as may be necessary to determine the amount of incentive payments applied for and received. The 13 Washington State University extension energy program may direct a 14 utility to cease issuing incentive payments if the records are not 15 16 made available for examination upon request. A utility receiving such 17 a directive is not liable to the applicant for any incentive payments 18 or other damages for ceasing payments pursuant to the directive.

(24) The nonpower attributes of the renewable energy system 19 belong to the utility customer who owns or hosts the system or, in 20 21 the case of a community solar project or a shared commercial solar project, the participant, and can be kept, sold, or transferred at 22 the utility customer's discretion unless, in the case of a utility-23 owned community solar or shared commercial solar project, ((a 24 25 contract between the customer and the utility clearly specifies that 26 the attributes will be retained by the utility)) must be retired on behalf of the participant. 27

(25) All lists, technical specifications, determinations, and
 guidelines developed under this section must be made publicly
 available online by the Washington State University extension energy
 program.

32 (26) No certification may be issued under this section by the 33 <u>Washington State University extension energy program for any</u> 34 <u>renewable energy system, other than a community solar project, after</u> 35 June 30, ((2021)) <u>2020. No certification may be issued under this</u> 36 <u>section for any community solar project after June 30, 2022</u>.

37 (27) The Washington State University extension energy program 38 must collect a one-time fee for applications submitted under 39 subsection (1) of this section of one hundred twenty-five dollars per 40 applicant. The Washington State University extension energy program

must deposit all revenue generated by this fee into the state general 1 fund. The Washington State University extension energy program must 2 administer and budget for the program established in RCW 82.16.120, 3 this section, and RCW 82.16.170 in a manner that ensures its 4 administrative costs through June 30, 2022, are completely met by the 5 6 revenues from this fee. If the Washington State University extension energy program determines that the fee authorized in this subsection 7 is insufficient to cover the administrative costs through June 30, 8 9 2022, the Washington State University extension energy program must report to the legislature on costs incurred and fees collected and 10 11 demonstrate why a different fee amount or funding mechanism should be 12 authorized.

(28) The Washington State University extension energy program 13 14 may, through a public process, develop any program requirements, policies, and processes necessary for the administration 15 or 16 implementation of this section, RCW 82.16.120, 82.16.155, and 17 82.16.170. The department is authorized, in consultation with the Washington State University extension energy program, to adopt any 18 rules necessary for administration or implementation of the program 19 established under this section and RCW 82.16.170. 20

(29) Applications, certifications, requests for incentive payments under this section, and the information contained therein are not deemed tax information under RCW 82.32.330 and are subject to disclosure.

(30) (a) By November 1, 2019, and in compliance with RCW
43.01.036, the Washington State University extension energy program
must submit a report to the legislature that includes the following:

(i) The number and types of renewable energy systems that have
 been certified under this section as of July 1, 2019, both statewide
 and per participating utility;

(ii) The number of utilities that are approaching or have reached the credit limit established under RCW 82.16.130(2) or the thresholds established under subsection (13) of this section;

34 (iii) The share of renewable energy systems by type that 35 contribute to each utility's threshold under subsection (13) of this 36 section;

37 (iv) An assessment of the deployment of community solar projects 38 in the state, including but not limited to the following:

39 (A) An evaluation of whether or not community solar projects are40 being deployed in low-income and moderate-income communities, as

1 those terms are defined in RCW 43.63A.510, including a description of 2 any barriers to project deployment in these communities;

3 (B) A description of the share of community solar projects by 4 administrator type that contribute to each utility's threshold under 5 subsection (13)(a) of this section; and

6 (C) A description of any barriers to participation by nonprofits 7 and local housing authorities in the incentive program established 8 under this section and under RCW 82.16.170;

9 (v) The total dollar amount of incentive payments that have been 10 made to participants in the incentive program established under this 11 section to date; and

(vi) The total number of megawatts of solar photovoltaic capacity installed to date by participants in the incentive program established under this section.

(b) By December 31, 2019, the legislature must review the report 15 16 submitted under (a) of this subsection and determine whether the 17 credit limit established under RCW 82.16.130(2) should be increased to two percent of a light and power business's taxable power sales 18 generated in calendar year 2014 and due under RCW 82.16.020(1)(b) or 19 two hundred fifty thousand dollars, whichever is greater, in order to 20 21 achieve the legislative intent under section 1, chapter 36, Laws of 22 2017 3rd sp. sess.

23 (31) This section expires June 30, 2031.

24 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 6. A new section is added to chapter 82.16 25 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and section 7 of this act unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) (i) "Administrator" means the utility, nonprofit, tribal housing authority as provided in (a) (ii) of this subsection, or other local housing authority that organizes and administers a community solar project as provided in section 7 of this act and RCW 82.16.170.

(ii) A tribal housing authority may only administer a community solar project on tribal lands or lands held in trust for a federally recognized tribe by the United States for subscribers who are tribal members.

37 (b) "Certification" means the authorization issued by the 38 Washington State University extension energy program establishing a 39 community solar project administrator's eligibility to receive a low-

income community solar incentive payment from the electric utility serving the site of the community solar project, on behalf of, and for the purpose of providing direct benefits to, its low-income subscribers, low-income service provider subscribers, and tribal and public agency subscribers.

(c) "Community solar project" means a solar energy system that:

7 (i) Has a direct current nameplate capacity that is greater than 8 12 kilowatts but no greater than 199 kilowatts;

9 (ii) Has, at minimum, either two subscribers or one low-income 10 service provider subscriber; and

(iii) Meets the applicable eligibility requirements in section 7 of this act and RCW 82.16.170.

13 (d) "Consumer-owned utility" has the same meaning as in RCW 14 19.280.020.

15 (e) "Electric utility" or "utility" means a consumer-owned 16 utility or investor-owned utility as those terms are defined in RCW 17 19.280.020.

18 (f) "Energy assistance" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 19 19.405.020.

20 (g) "Energy burden" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 21 19.405.020.

(h) "Governing body" has the same meaning as provided in RCW19.280.020.

(i) (i) "Installed cost" includes only the renewable energy system
 components and fees that are integral and necessary for the
 generation of electricity. Components and fees include:

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(A) Solar modules and inverters;

(B) Balance of system, such as racking, wiring, switch gears, andmeter bases;

30 (C) Nonhardware costs incurred up to the date of the final
 31 electrical inspection, such as fees associated with engineering,
 32 permitting, interconnection, and application;

33 (D) Labor; and

34 (E) Sales tax.

(ii) "Installed cost" does not include structures and fixtures that are not integral and necessary to the generation of electricity, such as carports, roofing, and energy storage.

(j) "Low-income service provider" includes, but is not limited to, a local community action agency or local community service agency designated by the department of commerce under chapter 43.63A RCW, local housing authority, tribal housing authority, low-income tribal housing program, affordable housing provider, food bank, or other nonprofit organization that provides services to low-income households.

5 (k) "Multifamily residential building" means a building 6 containing more than two sleeping units or dwelling units where 7 occupants are primarily permanent in nature.

8 (1) "Person" means an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, 9 company, association, agency, or any other legal entity.

10 (m) "Preferred sites" means rooftops, structures, existing 11 impervious surfaces, landfills, brownfields, previously developed 12 sites, irrigation canals and ponds, stormwater collection ponds, 13 industrial areas, dual-use solar projects that ensure ongoing 14 agricultural operations, and other sites that do not displace 15 critical habitat or productive farmland as defined by state and 16 county planning processes.

(n) "Public agency" means any political subdivision of the state including, but not limited to, municipal and county governments, special purpose districts, and local housing authorities, but does not include state agencies.

(o)(i) Except as otherwise provided in (o)(ii) of this subsection, "qualifying subscriber" means a low-income subscriber, low-income service provider subscriber, tribal agency subscriber, or public agency subscriber.

(ii) For tribal agency subscribers and public agency subscribers, only the portion of their subscription to a community solar project that is demonstrated to benefit low-income beneficiaries, including low-income service providers and services provided to low-income citizens or households, is to be considered a qualifying subscriber.

30 (p) "Subscriber" means a retail electric customer of an electric 31 utility who owns or is the beneficiary of one or more units of a 32 community solar project directly interconnected with that same 33 utility.

34 (q) "Subscription" means an agreement between a subscriber and 35 the administrator of a community solar project.

36 (2) This section expires June 30, 2038.

37 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 7. A new section is added to chapter 82.16 38 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Beginning July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2033, 1 an administrator of a community solar project meeting the eligibility 2 requirements described in this section and RCW 82.16.170(3) may 3 submit an application to the Washington State University extension 4 energy program to receive a precertification for a community solar 5 6 project. Projects with precertification applications approved by the Washington State University extension energy program have two years 7 to complete their projects and apply for certification. Projects that 8 have not completed certification within two years may apply to the 9 Washington State University extension energy program for an extension 10 11 of their precertification status for an additional 180 days if they 12 can demonstrate significant progress during the time they were in precertification status. By certifying qualified projects pursuant to 13 the requirements of this section and RCW 82.16.170(3), the Washington 14 State University extension energy program authorizes the utility 15 16 serving the site of a community solar project in the state of 17 Washington to remit a one-time low-income community solar incentive 18 payment to the community solar project administrator, who accepts the payment on behalf of, and for the purpose of providing direct 19 benefits to, the project's qualifying subscribers. 20

(2) A one-time low-income community solar incentive payment remitted to a community solar project administrator for a project certified under this section equals the sum of the following:

(a) An amount, not to exceed \$20,000 per community solar project,
equal to the community solar project's administrative costs related
to the administrative start-up of the project for qualifying
subscribers; and

(b) An amount that does not exceed 100 percent of the proportional cost of the installed cost of the share of the community solar project that provides direct benefits to qualifying subscribers, taking into account any federal tax credits or other federal or nonfederal grants or incentives that the program is benefiting from.

34 (3) No new certification may be issued under this section for a 35 community solar project that was certified under RCW 82.16.120 or 36 82.16.165, or for a community solar project served by a utility that 37 has elected not to participate in the incentive program provided in 38 this section.

39 (4) Community solar projects that are under precertification 40 status under RCW 82.16.165 as of June 30, 2020, may not apply for

1 precertification of that same project for the one-time low-income 2 community solar incentive payment provided in this section.

3 (5)(a) In addition to the one-time low-income community solar 4 incentive payment under subsection (2) of this section, a 5 participating utility must also provide the following compensation 6 for the generation of electricity from the certified project:

7 (i) For a community solar project that has an alternating current 8 nameplate capacity greater than 12 kilowatts but no greater than 100 9 kilowatts, and that is connected behind the electric service meter, 10 compensation must be determined in accordance with RCW 80.60.020 and 11 provided to the metered customer receiving service at the situs of 12 the meter.

(ii) For all other community solar projects, compensation must be determined at a value set by the participating utility and paid to the administrator or subscribers according to the agreement between the project and the utility.

(iii) An administrator may deduct ongoing administrative costs from compensation provided from power generation, provided those costs are identified in the subscription agreement or justified to the Washington State University extension energy program. The Washington State University extension energy program shall review any such administrative costs justifications for reasonableness and approve, reject, or negotiate changes to the proposal.

24 (b) If the utility provides compensation for the generation of 25 electricity to the administrator, the administrator of a community 26 solar project must provide that compensation to the project subscribers. For 10 years after certification, and by March 1st of 27 each year following certification, the provider of compensation for 28 29 the generation of electricity to the subscriber, whether the utility or the administrator, but not both, must provide the Washington State 30 31 University extension energy program with signed statements of the 32 following for the preceding year:

33 (i) The energy production for the period for which compensation 34 is to be provided;

35 (ii) Each subscriber's units of the project;

36 (iii) The amount disbursed to each subscriber for the period; and
37 (iv) The date and amount disbursed to each subscriber.

38 (6) A utility's participation in the incentive program provided 39 in this section is voluntary.

1 (a) The utility may terminate its voluntary participation in the program by providing notice in writing to the Washington State 2 3 University extension energy program to cease accepting new applications for precertification for community solar projects that 4 would be served by that utility. Such notice of termination of 5 6 participation is effective after 15 days, at which point the 7 Washington State University extension energy program may not accept new applications for precertification for community solar projects 8 that would be served by that utility. 9

10 (b) Upon receiving a utility's notice of termination of 11 participation in the incentive program, the Washington State 12 University extension energy program must report on its website that 13 community solar project customers of that utility are no longer 14 eligible to receive new certifications under the program.

15 (c) A utility that has terminated participation in the program 16 may resume participation upon filing a notice with the Washington 17 State University extension energy program.

18 (7) (a) The Washington State University extension energy program 19 may issue certifications authorizing incentive payments under this 20 section in a total statewide amount not to exceed \$20,000,000, and 21 subject to the following biennial dollar limits:

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(i) For fiscal year 2023, \$300,000; and

23 (ii) For each biennium beginning on or after July 1, 2023, 24 \$5,000,000.

25 (b) The Washington State University extension energy program must 26 attempt to equitably distribute incentive funds throughout the state. 27 Considerations for equitable fund distribution, based on precertification applications received from administrators served by 28 29 utilities voluntarily participating in the program, may include measures to reserve or allocate available funds based on the 30 31 proportion of public utility taxes collected, the proportion of the 32 state's low-income customers served by each utility based on low-33 income home energy assistance program data at the department of commerce, and measures to achieve an equitable geographic 34 distribution of community solar installations and a diversity of 35 administrative models for community solar projects. If an equitable 36 distribution of funds is not feasible due to a 37 lack of precertification applications, the Washington State University 38 39 extension energy program may allocate funds based on (a) of this 40 subsection on a first-come, first-served basis.

1 (c) The Washington State University extension energy program must 2 ensure that at least \$2,000,000 of the statewide total for the entire 3 program is used to support nonprofit organizations' innovative 4 approaches to allocating benefits to subscribers, defining and 5 valuing benefits to be provided to subscribers or other aspects of 6 the subscriber, administrator, system host, and utility relationship.

7 (d) The Washington State University extension energy program must 8 also ensure that at least \$2,000,000 of the statewide total for the 9 entire program is available to tribal governments and their 10 designated subdivisions and agencies.

11 (e) The Washington State University extension energy program 12 shall regularly publish and update guidelines for how it manages the 13 allocation of available funding, based on the evaluation of 14 applications and the factors specified in (b) of this subsection.

(8) (a) Prior to obtaining certification under this section, the administrator of a community solar project must apply for precertification against the funds available for incentive payments under subsection (7) of this section in order to be guaranteed an incentive payment under this section. The application for precertification must include, at a minimum:

(i) A demonstration of how the project will deliver continuing direct benefits to low-income subscribers. A direct benefit can include credit for the power generation for the community solar project or other mechanisms that lower the energy burden of a lowincome subscriber; and

(ii) Any other information the Washington State University
 extension energy program deems necessary in determining eligibility
 for precertification.

(b) The administrator of a community solar project must complete an application for certification in accordance with the requirements of subsection (9) of this section within less than two years of being approved for precertification status. The administrator must submit a project update to the Washington State University extension energy program after one year in precertification status.

(9) To obtain certification for the one-time community solar incentive payment provided under this section, a project administrator must submit to the Washington State University extension energy program an application, including, at a minimum:

39 (a) A signed statement that the applicant has not previously40 received a notice of eligibility from the department under RCW

1 82.16.120 or the Washington State University extension energy program 2 under RCW 82.16.165 entitling the applicant to receive annual 3 incentive payments for electricity generated by the community solar 4 project at the same meter location;

5 (b) A signed statement of the costs paid by the administrator 6 related to administering the project for qualifying subscribers;

7 (c) A signed statement of the total project costs, including the
8 proportional cost of the share of the community solar project that
9 provides direct benefits to qualifying subscribers;

10 (d) A signed statement describing the amount of the upfront 11 incentive and the timing, method, and distribution of estimated 12 benefits to qualifying subscribers. The statement must describe any 13 estimated energy burden reduction associated with the direct 14 benefits;

(e) Available system operation data, such as global positioningsystem coordinates, tilt, estimated shading, and azimuth;

17 (f) Any other information the Washington State University 18 extension energy program deems necessary in determining eligibility 19 and incentive levels or administering the program;

(g) (i) Except as provided in (g) (ii) of this subsection (9), the date that the community solar project received its final electrical inspection from the applicable local jurisdiction, as well as a copy of the permit or, if the permit is available online, the permit number or other documentation deemed acceptable by the Washington State University extension energy program;

(ii) The Washington State University extension energy program may 26 waive the requirement in (g)(i) of this subsection (9), accepting an 27 application and granting provisional certification prior to proof of 28 final electrical inspection. Provisional certification expires 180 29 days after issuance, unless the applicant submits proof of the final 30 31 electrical inspection from the applicable local jurisdiction or the 32 Washington State University extension energy program extends 33 certification, for a term or terms of 30 days, due to extenuating circumstances; 34

(h) Confirmation of the number of qualifying subscribers; and

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(i) Any other information the Washington State University
 extension energy program deems necessary in determining eligibility
 and incentive levels or administering the program.

39 (10) No incentive payments may be authorized or accrued until the 40 final electrical inspection and executed interconnection agreement are submitted to the Washington State University extension energy
 program.

3 (11)(a) The Washington State University extension energy program 4 must review each project for which an application for certification 5 is submitted in accordance with subsection (8) of this section for 6 reasonable cost and financial structure, with a targeted installed 7 cost of \$2 per watt direct current for systems over 200 kilowatts and 8 \$2.25 per watt direct current for systems under 200 kilowatts.

(b) The Washington State University extension energy program may 9 approve an application for a project that costs more or less than the 10 11 targeted installed cost under (a) of this subsection based on a 12 review of the project, documents submitted by the project applicant, and available data. Project cost evaluations must exclude costs 13 14 associated with energy storage systems and electrical system improvements to permit grid-independent operation. Applicants may 15 16 petition the Washington State University extension energy program to 17 approve a higher cost per watt for unusual circumstances, except that 18 such costs may not include costs associated with energy storage 19 systems.

(c) The Washington State University extension energy program may review the cost per watt target under (a) of this subsection prior to each fiscal biennium and is authorized to determine a new cost per watt target.

(12) (a) Within 30 days of receipt of an application for 24 25 certification, the Washington State University extension energy program must notify the applicant and, except when a utility is the 26 applicant, the utility serving the site of the community solar 27 project, by mail or electronically, whether certification has been 28 granted. The certification notice must state the total dollar amount 29 of the low-income community solar incentive payment for which the 30 31 applicant is eligible under this section.

32 (b) Within 60 days of receipt of a notification under (a) of this 33 subsection, the utility serving the site of the community solar 34 project must remit the applicable one-time low-income community solar 35 incentive payment to the project administrator, who accepts the 36 payment on behalf of, and for the purpose of providing direct 37 benefits to, the project's qualifying subscribers.

38 (13)(a) Certification follows the community solar project if the 39 following conditions are met using procedures established by the 40 Washington State University extension energy program:

(i) The community solar project is transferred to a new owner who
 notifies the Washington State University extension energy program of
 the transfer;

4 (ii) The new owner provides an executed interconnection agreement
5 with the utility serving the site of the community solar project; and
6 (iii) The new owner agrees to provide equivalent ongoing benefits

7 to qualifying subscribers as the current owner.

8 (b) In the event that a qualifying subscriber terminates their 9 participation in a community solar project during the first 120 10 months after project certification, the system certification follows 11 the project and participation must be transferred to a new qualifying 12 subscriber.

(14) Beginning January 1, 2023, the Washington State University extension energy program must post on its website and update at least monthly a report, by utility, of:

16 (a) The number of certifications issued for community solar 17 projects; and

(b) An estimate of the amount of credit that has not yet been allocated for low-income community solar incentive payments and that remains available for new community solar project certifications in the state.

(15) Persons receiving incentive payments under this section must keep and preserve, for a period of five years for the duration of the consumer contract, suitable records as may be necessary to determine the amount of incentive payments applied for and received.

(16) The nonpower attributes of the community solar project mustbe retired on behalf of the individual subscribers.

(17) All lists, technical specifications, determinations, and
 guidelines developed under this section must be made publicly
 available online by the Washington State University extension energy
 program.

32 (18) The Washington State University extension energy program 33 must collect a one-time fee for precertification applications 34 submitted under this section of \$500 per applicant. The Washington 35 State University extension energy program must deposit all revenue 36 generated by this fee into the state general fund.

37 (19) The Washington State University extension energy program 38 may, through a public process, develop program requirements, 39 policies, and processes necessary for the administration or 40 implementation of this section.

1 (20) Applications, certifications, requests for incentive 2 payments under this section, and the information contained therein 3 are not deemed tax information under RCW 82.32.330 and are subject to 4 disclosure.

5 (21) No certification may be issued under this section by the 6 Washington State University extension energy program for a community 7 solar project after June 30, 2035.

8 (22) Community solar projects certified under this section by the 9 Washington State University extension energy program must be sited on 10 preferred sites to protect natural and working lands.

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(23) This section expires June 30, 2038.

12 Sec. 8. RCW 82.16.170 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 7 are each 13 amended to read as follows:

(1) The purpose of community solar programs is to facilitate
broad, equitable community investment in and access to solar power.
Beginning July 1, 2017, a community solar administrator may organize
and administer a community solar project as provided in this section.

18 (2) ((A)) In order to receive certification for the incentive payment provided under RCW 82.16.165(1) by June 30, 2022, a community 19 20 solar project must have a direct current nameplate capacity that is 21 no more than one thousand kilowatts and must have at least ten participants or at least one participant for every ten kilowatts of 22 direct current nameplate capacity, whichever is greater. A community 23 24 solar project that has a direct current nameplate capacity greater 25 than five hundred kilowatts must be subject to a standard interconnection agreement with the utility serving the situs of the 26 27 community solar project. Except for community solar projects authorized under subsection $((\frac{9}{10}))$ (10) of this section, each 28 participant must be a customer of the utility providing service at 29 30 the situs of the community solar project.

31 (3) <u>In order to receive certification for the incentive payment</u> 32 <u>provided under section 7 of this act beginning July 1, 2022, a</u> 33 <u>community solar project must meet the following requirements:</u>

34 <u>(a) The administrator of the community solar project must be a</u> 35 <u>utility, nonprofit, or tribal housing authority that administers a</u> 36 <u>community solar project on tribal lands or lands held in trust for a</u> 37 <u>federally recognized tribe by the United States for subscribers who</u> 38 <u>are tribal members, or other local housing authority. The</u> 39 <u>administrator of the community solar project must apply for</u> 1 precertification under section 7 of this act on or after July 1, 2 2022;

3 (b) The community solar project must have a direct current 4 nameplate capacity that is greater than 12 kilowatts but no greater 5 than 199 kilowatts, and must have at least two subscribers or one 6 low-income service provider subscriber;

7 (c) The administrator of the community solar project must provide
8 a verified list of qualifying subscribers;

9 <u>(d) Verification that an individual household subscriber meets</u> 10 <u>the definition of low-income must be provided to the administrator by</u> 11 <u>an entity with authority to maintain the confidentiality of the</u> 12 <u>income status of the low-income subscriber. If the providing entity</u> 13 <u>incurs costs to verify a subscriber's income status, the</u> 14 <u>administrator must provide reimbursement of those costs;</u>

15 (e) Except for community solar projects authorized under 16 subsection (10) of this section, each subscriber must be a customer 17 of the utility providing service at the site of the community solar 18 project;

19 (f) In the event that a low-income subscriber in a community solar project certified under section 7 of this act moves within 120 20 months of system certification from the household premises of the 21 subscriber's current subscription to another, the subscriber may 22 23 continue the subscription, provided that the new household premises is served by the utility providing service at the site of the 24 25 community solar project. In the event that a subscriber is no longer 26 served by that utility or the subscriber terminates participation in 27 a community solar project certified under section 7 of this act, the certification follows the system and participation must be 28 transferred by the administrator to a new gualifying subscriber as 29 30 specified in section 7 of this act;

31 (g) The administrator must include in the application for 32 precertification a project prospectus that demonstrates how the 33 administrator intends to provide direct benefits to qualifying 34 subscribers for the duration of their subscription to the community 35 solar project; and

36 (h) The length of the subscription term for low-income 37 subscribers must be the same length as for other subscribers, if 38 applicable.

39 <u>(4)</u> The administrator of a community solar project must 40 administer the project in a transparent manner that allows for fair 1 and nondiscriminatory opportunity for participation by utility 2 customers.

3 (((4))) (5) The administrator of a community solar project may 4 establish a reasonable fee to cover costs incurred in organizing and 5 administering the community solar project. Project participants, 6 prior to making the commitment to participate in the project, must be 7 given clear and conspicuous notice of the portion of the incentive 8 payment that will be used for this purpose.

9 (((5))) <u>(6)</u> The administrator of a community solar project must 10 maintain and update annually through June 30, 2030, the following 11 information for each project it operates or administers:

- 12 (a) Ownership information;
- 13 (b) Contact information for technical management questions;

14 (c) Business address;

(d) Project design details, including project location, outputcapacity, equipment list, and interconnection information; and

17 (e) Subscription information, including rates, fees, terms, and 18 conditions.

19 (((-6))) (7) The administrator of a community solar project must 20 provide the information required in subsection (((-5))) (6) of this 21 section to the Washington State University extension energy program 22 at the time it submits the applications allowed under RCW 23 82.16.165(1) and section 7 of this act.

24 (((7))) <u>(8)</u> The administrator of a community solar project must 25 provide each project participant with a disclosure form containing 26 all material terms and conditions of participation in the project, 27 including but not limited to the following:

(a) Plain language disclosure of the terms under which the project participant's share of any incentive payment will be calculated by the Washington State University extension energy program ((over the life of the contract));

32 (b) Contract provisions regulating the disposition or transfer of 33 the project participant's interest in the project, including any 34 potential costs associated with such a transfer;

35

(c) All recurring and nonrecurring charges;

36 (d) A description of the billing and payment procedures;

37 (e) A description of any compensation to be paid in the event of 38 project underperformance;

39 (f) Current production projections and a description of the 40 methodology used to develop the projections; 1

(g) Contact information for questions and complaints; and

2 (h) Any other terms and conditions of the services provided by3 the administrator.

4 (((8))) <u>(9)</u> A utility may not adopt rates, terms, conditions, or 5 standards that unduly or unreasonably discriminate between utility-6 administered community solar projects and those administered by 7 another entity.

(((9))) <u>(10)</u> A public utility district that is engaged 8 in distributing electricity to more than one retail electric customer in 9 the state and a joint operating agency organized under chapter 43.52 10 RCW on or before January 1, 2017, may enter into an agreement with 11 12 each other to construct and own a community solar project that is located on property owned by a joint operating agency or on property 13 that receives electric service from a participating public utility 14 district. Each participant of a community solar project under this 15 16 subsection must be a customer of at least one of the public utility districts that is a party to the agreement with a joint operating 17 agency to construct and own a community solar project. 18

19 (((10))) <u>(11)</u> The Washington utilities and transportation 20 commission must publish, without disclosing proprietary information, 21 a list of the following:

(a) Entities other than utilities, including affiliates or
 subsidiaries of utilities, that organize and administer community
 solar projects; and

(b) Community solar projects and related programs and services offered by investor-owned utilities.

(((1))) (12) If a consumer-owned utility opts to provide a community solar program or contracts with a nonutility administrator to offer a community solar program, the governing body of the consumer-owned utility must publish, without disclosing proprietary information, a list of the nonutility administrators contracted by the utility as part of its community solar program.

33 ((((12))) (13) Except for parties engaged in actions and transactions regulated under laws administered by other authorities 34 and exempted under RCW 19.86.170, a violation of this section 35 constitutes an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce in 36 violation of chapter 19.86 RCW, the consumer protection act. Acts in 37 violation of chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. are not 38 39 reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of 40 business, and constitute matters vitally affecting the public

interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act,
 chapter 19.86 RCW.

3 (((13))) <u>(14)</u> Nothing in this section may be construed as 4 intending to preclude persons from investing in or possessing an 5 ownership interest in a community solar project, or from applying for 6 and receiving federal investment tax credits.

7 (15) This section expires June 30, 2038.

8 Sec. 9. RCW 82.16.110 and 2011 c 179 s 2 are each amended to 9 read as follows:

10 <u>(1)</u> The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter 11 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

((((1))) (a) "Administrator" means an owner and assignee of a 12 community solar project as defined in ((subsection (2)(a)(i))) 13 (b) (i) (A) of this ((section)) subsection that is responsible for 14 15 applying for the investment cost recovery incentive on behalf of the other owners and performing such administrative tasks on behalf of 16 the other owners as may be necessary, such as receiving investment 17 18 cost recovery incentive payments, and allocating and paying appropriate amounts of such payments to the other owners. 19

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(((2)(a))) (b)(i) "Community solar project" means:

((((i))) (A) A solar energy system that is capable of generating up to seventy-five kilowatts of electricity and is owned by local individuals, households, nonprofit organizations, or nonutility businesses that is placed on the property owned by a cooperating local governmental entity that is not in the light and power business or in the gas distribution business;

(((ii))) (B) A utility-owned solar energy system that is capable of generating up to seventy-five kilowatts of electricity and that is voluntarily funded by the utility's ratepayers where, in exchange for their financial support, the utility gives contributors a payment or credit on their utility bill for the value of the electricity produced by the project; or

(((iii))) (C) A solar energy system, placed on the property owned by a cooperating local governmental entity that is not in the light and power business or in the gas distribution business, that is capable of generating up to seventy-five kilowatts of electricity, and that is owned by a company whose members are each eligible for an investment cost recovery incentive for the same customer-generated electricity as provided in RCW 82.16.120. 1 (((b))) <u>(ii)</u> For the purposes of "community solar project" as
2 defined in (((a))) <u>(b)(i)</u> of this subsection:

3

(((i))) <u>(A)</u> "Company" means an entity that is:

4 (((A)))(I) A limited liability company; (((II) A)) <u>a</u> cooperative
5 formed under chapter 23.86 RCW; or (((III) A)) <u>a</u> mutual corporation
6 or association formed under chapter 24.06 RCW; and

7 (((B))) <u>(II)</u> Not a "utility" as defined in this subsection
8 (((2)(b))) <u>(1)(b)(ii)</u>; and

9 (((ii))) <u>(B)</u> "Nonprofit organization" means an organization 10 exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) of the federal 11 internal revenue code of 1986, as amended, as of January 1, 2009; and

12 ((((iii))) (C) "Utility" means a light and power business, an 13 electric cooperative, or a mutual corporation that provides 14 electricity service.

(((3))) <u>(c)</u> "Customer-generated electricity" means a community 15 16 solar project or the alternating current electricity that is 17 generated from a renewable energy system located in Washington and installed on an individual's, businesses', or local government's real 18 property that is also provided electricity generated by a light and 19 power business. Except for community solar projects, a system located 20 21 on a leasehold interest does not qualify under this definition. Except for utility-owned community solar projects, "customer-22 generated electricity" does not include electricity generated by a 23 light and power business with greater than one thousand megawatt-24 25 hours of annual sales or a gas distribution business.

26 (((4))) <u>(d)</u> "Economic development kilowatt-hour" means the actual 27 kilowatt-hour measurement of customer-generated electricity 28 multiplied by the appropriate economic development factor.

29 (((5))) <u>(e)</u> "Local governmental entity" means any unit of local 30 government of this state including, but not limited to, counties, 31 cities, towns, municipal corporations, quasi-municipal corporations, 32 special purpose districts, and school districts.

33 (((6))) <u>(f)</u> "Photovoltaic cell" means a device that converts 34 light directly into electricity without moving parts.

35 (((7))) <u>(g)</u> "Renewable energy system" means a solar energy 36 system, an anaerobic digester as defined in RCW 82.08.900, or a wind 37 generator used for producing electricity.

38 (((8))) <u>(h)</u> "Solar energy system" means any device or combination 39 of devices or elements that rely upon direct sunlight as an energy 40 source for use in the generation of electricity. 1 ((((9))) <u>(i)</u> "Solar inverter" means the device used to convert 2 direct current to alternating current in a solar energy system.

3 (((10))) (j) "Solar module" means the smallest nondivisible self-4 contained physical structure housing interconnected photovoltaic 5 cells and providing a single direct current electrical output.

6 (((11))) <u>(k)</u> "Stirling converter" means a device that produces 7 electricity by converting heat from a solar source utilizing a 8 stirling engine.

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(2) This section expires June 30, 2033.

10 Sec. 10. RCW 82.16.120 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 3 are each 11 amended to read as follows:

(1) (a) Any individual, business, local governmental entity, not in the light and power business or in the gas distribution business, or a participant in a community solar project may apply to the light and power business serving the situs of the system, each fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2017, for an investment cost recovery incentive for each kilowatt-hour from a customer-generated electricity renewable energy system.

(b) In the case of a community solar project as defined in RCW $82.16.110((\frac{(2)(a)(i)}{(1)(b)(i)(A)})$, the administrator must apply for the investment cost recovery incentive on behalf of each of the other owners.

(c) In the case of a community solar project as defined in RCW 82.16.110(((2)(a)(iii))) (1)(b)(i)(C), the company owning the community solar project must apply for the investment cost recovery incentive on behalf of each member of the company.

(2) (a) Before submitting for the first time the application for the incentive allowed under subsection (4) of this section, the applicant must submit to the department of revenue and to the climate and rural energy development center at the Washington State University, established under RCW 28B.30.642, a certification in a form and manner prescribed by the department that includes, but is not limited to, the information described in (c) of this subsection.

(b) The department may not accept certifications submitted to the
 department under (a) of this subsection after September 30, 2017.

36 (c) The certification must include:

37 (i) The name and address of the applicant and location of the 38 renewable energy system. 1 (A) If the applicant is an administrator of a community solar 2 project as defined in RCW 82.16.110(((2)(a)(i))) <u>(1)(b)(i)(A)</u>, the 3 certification must also include the name and address of each of the 4 owners of the community solar project.

5 (B) If the applicant is a company that owns a community solar 6 project as defined in RCW 82.16.110(((2)(a)(iii))) (1)(b)(i)(C), the 7 certification must also include the name and address of each member 8 of the company;

9

(ii) The applicant's tax registration number;

10 (iii) That the electricity produced by the applicant meets the 11 definition of "customer-generated electricity" and that the renewable 12 energy system produces electricity with:

13 (A) Any solar inverters and solar modules manufactured in 14 Washington state;

(B) A wind generator powered by blades manufactured in Washington state;

17 18 (C) A solar inverter manufactured in Washington state;

(D) A solar module manufactured in Washington state;

19 (E) A stirling converter manufactured in Washington state; or

20 (F) Solar or wind equipment manufactured outside of Washington 21 state;

(iv) That the electricity can be transformed or transmitted for entry into or operation in parallel with electricity transmission and distribution systems; and

(v) The date that the renewable energy system received its final electrical inspection from the applicable local jurisdiction.

(d) Within thirty days of receipt of the certification the 27 department of revenue must notify the applicant by mail, 28 or electronically as provided in RCW 82.32.135, whether the renewable 29 energy system qualifies for an incentive under this section. The 30 31 department may consult with the climate and rural energy development 32 center to determine eligibility for the incentive. System certifications and the information contained therein are not 33 confidential tax information under RCW 82.32.330 and are subject to 34 35 disclosure.

36 (3) (a) By August 1st of each year through August 1, 2017, the 37 application for the incentive must be made to the light and power 38 business serving the situs of the system by certification in a form 39 and manner prescribed by the department that includes, but is not 40 limited to, the following information: 1 (i) The name and address of the applicant and location of the 2 renewable energy system.

3 (A) If the applicant is an administrator of a community solar 4 project as defined in RCW 82.16.110(((2)(a)(i))) <u>(1)(b)(i)(A)</u>, the 5 application must also include the name and address of each of the 6 owners of the community solar project.

7 (B) If the applicant is a company that owns a community solar 8 project as defined in RCW 82.16.110(((2)(a)(iii))) (1)(b)(i)(C), the 9 application must also include the name and address of each member of 10 the company;

11

(ii) The applicant's tax registration number;

(iii) The date of the notification from the department of revenue stating that the renewable energy system is eligible for the incentives under this section; and

15 (iv) A statement of the amount of kilowatt-hours generated by the 16 renewable energy system in the prior fiscal year.

17 (b) Within sixty days of receipt of the incentive certification the light and power business serving the situs of the system must 18 19 notify the applicant in writing whether the incentive payment will be authorized or denied. The business may consult with the climate and 20 rural energy development center to determine eligibility for the 21 incentive payment. Incentive certifications and the information 22 23 contained therein are not confidential tax information under RCW 82.32.330 and are subject to disclosure. 24

25 (c)(i) Persons, administrators of community solar projects, and 26 companies receiving incentive payments must keep and preserve, for a period of five years, suitable records as may be necessary to 27 28 determine the amount of incentive applied for and received. Such records must be open for examination at any time upon notice by the 29 light and power business that made the payment or by the department. 30 31 If upon examination of any records or from other information obtained 32 by the business or department it appears that an incentive has been paid in an amount that exceeds the correct amount of incentive 33 payable, the business may assess against the person for the amount 34 found to have been paid in excess of the correct amount of incentive 35 payable and must add thereto interest on the amount. Interest is 36 37 assessed in the manner that the department assesses interest upon delinquent tax under RCW 82.32.050. 38

1 (ii) If it appears that the amount of incentive paid is less than 2 the correct amount of incentive payable the business may authorize 3 additional payment.

(4) Except for community solar projects, the investment cost 4 recovery incentive may be paid fifteen cents per economic development 5 6 kilowatt-hour unless requests exceed the amount authorized for credit to the participating light and power business. For community solar 7 projects, the investment cost recovery incentive may be paid thirty 8 cents per economic development kilowatt-hour unless requests exceed 9 the amount authorized for credit to the participating light and power 10 11 business. For the purposes of this section, the rate paid for the 12 investment cost recovery incentive may be multiplied by the following 13 factors:

(a) For customer-generated electricity produced using solar
 modules manufactured in Washington state or a solar stirling
 converter manufactured in Washington state, two and four-tenths;

(b) For customer-generated electricity produced using a solar or a wind generator equipped with an inverter manufactured in Washington state, one and two-tenths;

20 (c) For customer-generated electricity produced using an 21 anaerobic digester, or by other solar equipment or using a wind 22 generator equipped with blades manufactured in Washington state, one; 23 and

24 (d) For all other customer-generated electricity produced by 25 wind, eight-tenths.

(5) (a) No individual, household, business, or local governmental
 entity is eligible for incentives provided under subsection (4) of
 this section for more than five thousand dollars per year.

(b) Except as provided in (c) through (e) of this subsection (5),
each applicant in a community solar project is eligible for up to
five thousand dollars per year.

32 (c) Where the applicant is an administrator of a community solar 33 project as defined in RCW 82.16.110($(\frac{2}{a}, \frac{1}{a})$) (1)(b)(i)(A), each 34 owner is eligible for an incentive but only in proportion to the 35 ownership share of the project, up to five thousand dollars per year.

36 (d) Where the applicant is a company owning a community solar 37 project that has applied for an investment cost recovery incentive on 38 behalf of its members, each member of the company is eligible for an 39 incentive that would otherwise belong to the company but only in 40 proportion to each ownership share of the company, up to five

1 thousand dollars per year. The company itself is not eligible for 2 incentives under this section.

3 (e) In the case of a utility-owned community solar project, each 4 ratepayer that contributes to the project is eligible for an 5 incentive in proportion to the contribution, up to five thousand 6 dollars per year.

7 (6) The climate and rural energy development center at Washington 8 State University energy program may establish guidelines and 9 standards for technologies that are identified as Washington 10 manufactured and therefore most beneficial to the state's 11 environment.

12 (7) The environmental attributes of the renewable energy system 13 belong to the applicant, and do not transfer to the state or the 14 light and power business upon receipt of the investment cost recovery 15 incentive.

16 (8) No incentive may be paid under this section for kilowatt-17 hours generated before July 1, 2005, or after June 30, 2017, except 18 as provided in subsections (10) through (12) of this section.

(9) Beginning October 1, 2017, program management, technical 19 review, and tracking responsibilities of the department under this 20 section are transferred to the Washington State University extension 21 energy program. At the earliest date practicable and no later than 22 September 30, 2017, the department must transfer all records 23 necessary for the administration of the remaining incentive payments 24 25 due under this section to the Washington State University extension 26 energy program.

(10) Participants in the renewable energy investment cost recovery program under this section will continue to receive payments for electricity produced through June 30, 2020, at the same rates their utility paid to participants for electricity produced between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016.

32 (11) In order to continue to receive the incentive payment allowed under subsection (4) of this section, a person or community 33 solar project administrator who has, by September 30, 2017, submitted 34 a complete certification to the department under subsection (2) of 35 36 this section must apply to the Washington State University extension energy program by April 30, 2018, for a certification authorizing the 37 38 utility serving the situs of the renewable energy system to annually 39 remit the incentive payment allowed under subsection (4) of this

1 section for each kilowatt-hour generated by the renewable energy 2 system through June 30, 2020.

(12) (a) The Washington State University extension energy program 3 must establish an application process and form by which to collect 4 the system operation data described in RCW 82.16.165(7)(a)(iii) from 5 6 each person or community solar project administrator applying for a certification under subsection (11) of this section. The Washington 7 State University extension energy program must notify any applicant 8 that providing this data is a condition of certification and that any 9 certification issued pursuant to this section is void as of June 30, 10 11 2018, if the applicant has failed to provide the data by that date.

12 (b) Beginning July 1, 2018, the Washington State University 13 extension energy program must, in a form and manner that is 14 consistent with the roles and processes established under RCW 15 82.16.165 (19) and (20), calculate for the year and provide to the 16 utility the amount of the incentive payment due to each participant 17 under subsection (11) of this section.

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(13) This section expires June 30, 2033.

19 Sec. 11. RCW 82.16.150 and 2010 c 202 s 5 are each amended to 20 read as follows:

(1) Owners of a community solar project as defined in RCW 21 22 82.16.110(((2)(a) (i) and (iii))) (1) (b)(i)(A) and (C) must agree to hold harmless the light and power business serving the situs of the 23 24 system, including any employee, for the good faith reliance on the 25 information contained in an application or certification submitted by an administrator or company. In addition, the light and power 26 27 business and any employee is immune from civil liability for the good 28 faith reliance on any misstatement that may be made in such application or certification. Should a light and power business or 29 30 employee prevail upon the defense provided in this section, it is 31 entitled to recover expenses and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred 32 in establishing the defense.

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(2) This section expires June 30, 2033.

34 Sec. 12. RCW 82.16.155 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 2 are each 35 amended to read as follows:

(1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for
the tax preference and incentives created under ((RCW 82.16.130 and))
sections 4 and 6, chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. This

1 performance statement is only intended to be used for subsequent 2 evaluation of the tax preference and incentives. It is not intended 3 to create a private right of action by any party or be used to 4 determine eligibility for preferential tax treatment.

5 (2) The legislature categorizes the tax preference created under 6 ((RCW 82.16.130)) section 4, chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. 7 and incentive payments authorized in section 6, chapter 36, Laws of 8 2017 3rd sp. sess. as intended to:

9 (a) Induce participating utilities to make incentive payments to 10 utility customers who invest in renewable energy systems; and

(b) By inducing utilities, nonprofit organizations, and utility customers to acquire and install renewable energy systems, retain jobs in the clean energy sector and create additional jobs.

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(3) The legislature's public policy objectives are to:

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(a) Increase energy independence from fossil fuels; and

(b) Promote economic development through increasing and improving investment in, development of, and use of clean energy technology in Washington; and

(c) Increase the number of jobs in and enhance the sustainabilityof the clean energy technology industry in Washington.

(4) It is the legislature's intent to provide the incentives in section<u>s 4 and</u> 6, chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. ((and RCW 82.16.130)) in order to ensure the sustainable job growth and vitality of the state's renewable energy sector. The purpose of the incentive is to reduce the costs associated with installing and operating solar energy systems by persons or entities receiving the incentive.

(5) As part of its ((2021)) 2023 tax preference reviews, the joint legislative audit and review committee must review the tax preferences and incentives in section<u>s 4 and</u> 6, chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. ((and RCW 82.16.130.)) The legislature intends for the legislative auditor to determine that the incentive has achieved its desired outcomes if the following objectives are achieved:

(a) Installation of one hundred fifteen megawatts of solar
 photovoltaic capacity by participants in the incentive program
 between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2021; and

37 (b) Growth of solar-related employment from 2015 levels, as 38 evidenced by: (i) An increased per capita rate of solar energy-related jobs in
 Washington, which may be determined by consulting a relevant trade
 association in the state; or

4 (ii) Achievement of an improved national ranking for solar 5 energy-related employment and per capita solar energy-related 6 employment, as reported in a nationally recognized report.

7 (6) In order to obtain the data necessary to perform the review, 8 the joint legislative audit and review committee may refer to data 9 collected by the Washington State University extension energy program 10 and may obtain employment data from the employment security 11 department.

12 (7) The Washington State University extension energy program must 13 collect, through the application process, data from persons claiming the tax credit under ((RCW 82.16.130)) section 4, chapter 36, Laws of 14 2017 3rd sp. sess. and persons receiving the incentive payments 15 16 created in ((RCW 82.16.165)) section 6, chapter 36, Laws of 2017 3rd 17 sp. sess., as necessary, and may collect data from other interested persons as necessary to report on the performance of chapter 36, Laws 18 19 of 2017 3rd sp. sess.

(8) All recipients of tax credits or incentive payments awarded under this chapter must provide data necessary to evaluate the tax preference performance objectives in this section as requested by the Washington State University extension energy program or the joint legislative audit and review committee. Failure to comply may result in the loss of a tax credit award or incentive payment in the following year.

27 (9) This section expires June 30, 2033.

28 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 13. The provisions of RCW 82.32.805 and 29 82.32.808 do not apply to this act.

30 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 14. This act is necessary for the immediate 31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of 32 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes 33 effect immediately.

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